IN THE CLAIMS:

The status of the claims is provided:

1. (currently amended) A deck board fastening device for securing deck boards to a support structure, said device comprising:

a **planar** top plate **portion** including a first **planar** flange and a second **planar** flange joined together along respective longitudinal edges, each of said **planar** flanges extending outward in a substantially horizontal plane, the juncture of said **planar** flanges defining the longitudinal center of said **planar** top plate **portion**;

at least one bottom tab extending downwardly from a bottom surface of said top plate; and

~~a~~ first **and second resilient** compression ~~element~~ **elements** extending **outwardly** from **opposite ends of** said top plate**, each of said compression elements having opposed sides compressible together**~~;~~

~~a second compression element, opposed to said first compression element, extending from said top plate~~.

2. (currently amended) The deck board fastening device of claim 1 wherein said compression elements extend from corresponding **first and second** tabs located **adjacent opposite** ~~at the longitudinal~~ ends of said **planar** top plate.

3. (withdrawn) The deck board fastening device of claim 1 further comprising a pedestal extending downward from the lower, center surface of said top plate, said wherein said compression elements project from said pedestal.

4. (original) The deck board fastening device of claim 1 wherein at least one of said compression elements projects upward from the top surface of said top plate and at least one of said compression elements projects downward from the bottom surface of said top plate.

5. (original) The deck board fastening device of claim 1 wherein said compression elements comprise outwardly diverging prongs.

6. (withdrawn) The deck board fastening device of claim 1 wherein said compression elements comprise hollow-centered loops.

7. (withdrawn) The deck board fastening device of claim 6 wherein said loops are circular in cross section.

8. (withdrawn) The deck board fastening device of claim 6 wherein said loops are rectangular in cross section.

9. (withdrawn) The deck board fastening device of claim 6 wherein said loops are polygonal in cross section.

10. (currently amended) A deck board fastening device for securing deck boards to a support structure, said device comprising:

a **planar** top plate including a first **planar** flange and a second **planar** flange joined together along respective longitudinal edges, each of said **planar** flanges extending outward in a substantially horizontal plane, the juncture of said **planar** flanges defining the longitudinal center of said **planar** top plate, said **planar** top plate having a first end and a longitudinally opposed second end;

a hole extending through said **planar** top plate at the center of said **planar** top plate;

a first tab extending **downwardly** from **a bottom surface of** said **planar** top plate in proximity to said first end;

a second tab extending **downwardly** from **a bottom surface of** said **planar** top plate in proximity to said second end;

a first **resilient** compression element projecting from said first tab; and,

a second **resilient** compression element projecting from said second tab**, said first and second resilient compression elements having opposed sides compressible together**.

Claims 11-15 (canceled)

16. (new) A combination deck board fastening device and plurality of deck boards, comprising:

a plurality of deck boards, each of said deck boards having slots provided therein;

at least one fastening device interposed between said plurality of deck boards, said fastening device comprising:

a planar top plate having a first planar flange at least partially disposed in said slot of one of said deck boards, and a planar second flange at least partially disposed in said slot of another of said deck boards, said first and second planar flanges joined together along respective longitudinal edges, the juncture of said planar flanges defining a longitudinal center of said planar top plate;

at least one bottom tab extending downwardly from a bottom surface of said planar top plate; and

first and second resilient compression elements extending outwardly from opposite ends of said planar top plate, said resilient compression elements having opposed sides compressible together for maintaining a spacing between adjacent deck boards while providing for compression and expansion of said deck boards.

17. (new) The combination deck board fastening device and plurality of deck boards of claim 16, wherein said compression elements extend from corresponding first and second tabs located adjacent opposite ends of said planar top plate.

18. (new) The combination deck board fastening device and plurality of deck boards of claim 16, wherein at least one of said compression elements projects upward from a top surface of said top plate and at least one of said compression elements projects downward from the bottom surface of said top plate.

19. (new) The combination deck board fastening device and plurality of deck boards of claim 16, wherein said compression elements comprise outwardly diverging prongs.

20. (new) The combination deck board fastening device and plurality of deck boards of claim 16, further comprising a center hole extending through said top plate, and a fastener receivable in said center hole.